

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM PANAMA DATED AUGUST 2, 1976 SENT
SECSTATE WASHDC IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5377

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: TALK WITH FOREIGN MINISTER

REFS: (A) STATE 190452 (B) PANAMA 5375

1. AFTER DELIVERING SECRETARY'S MESSAGE (REF A), I HAD
LONG DISCUSSION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOYD REGARDING
THE NON-ALIGNED MEETING IN SRI LANKA (REPORTED REF. B).
IN THE COURSE OF OUR TALK, I MENTIONED THE PUERTO RICO
ISSUE AS ONE THAT WAS OF DEEP INTEREST FOR US. I TOLD
THE MINISTER IT WAS CERTAIN THAT SOME OF THOSE ATTENDING
THE SRI LANKA SESSIONS WOULD TRY, AS THEY HAVE BEFORE,
TO MAKE THE FUTURE OF PUERTO RICO A TARGET FOR ATTACKS
ON THE U.S. I NOTED THAT THE PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE HAVE
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REPEATEDLY EXPRESSED THEIR VIEWS ON THEIR FUTURE IN FREE

ELECTIONS AND THAT THEY WERE SCHEDULED TO DO SO
ONCE AGAIN THIS NOVEMBER. IN THE PAST WELL OVER
NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF PUERTO RICANS HAD EXPRESSED A
CLEAR PREFERENCE EITHER FOR DIRECT STATEHOOD OR FOR SOME
FORM OF A COMMONWEALTH STATUS WITH CONTINUED CLOSE ASSOCIA-
TION WITH THE UNITED STATES. I ALSO REMINDED THE MINISTER
THAT THOSE WHO WERE PUSHING THIS ISSUE HARDEST IN INTER-
NATIONAL GATHERINGS WERE PEOPLE WHO DID NOT KNOW WHAT
FREE ELCTIONS WERE AND DID NOT TRUST THEIR OWN PEOPLE
TO USE THEM.

2. THE MINISTER SAID HE WAS TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE CUBAN
POSITION ON PUERTO RICO. HE HOPED THAT PANAMA COULD
AVOID ANY INVOLVEMENT IN DEBATE OF THIS ISSUE. HE SHOWED
ME A PARAGRAPH FROM A SPEECH HE IS WORKING ON FOR THE
SRI LANKA SESSION. ON PUERTO RICO, IT SAYS THAT THE
QUESTION OF INDEPENDENCE IS ONE FOR THE PUERTO RICANS
TO DECIDE. THE PATH TO INDEPENDENCE SHOULD REMAIN OPEN
IF THEY EVER FREELY CHOOSE TO USE IT. THAT, HE SAID,
IS ALL HE INTENDS TO SAY. HE THEN COMMENTED WRYLY THAT
HIS CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT MIGHT NOT EVEN WANT HIM TO SAY
THAT MUCH--SINCE IT MIGHT NOT BE TOO WELL RECEIVED BY
OTHER DELEGATIONS.

JORDAN UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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